

RECRUITMENT

We are looking for an experienced Groundsperson to join a small team carrying out maintenance of grass sports facilities in and around Reading

Skilled Groundsperson

**£15,078pa
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A minimum of three years' experience of maintaining fine turf areas is essential together with an ability to maintain and operate a wide range of turf machinery. Candidates should possess City & Guilds Phase 2 Training in a relevant subject, or hold an equivalent qualification. A clean driving licence is essential.

Some managerial skills and a proven ability to work as part of a team with minimum supervision is essential to the success of this important role.

You will be required to work flexible hours as well as working the occasional weekend or evenings to cover routine works and special events. There are opportunities for paid extras which can increase earnings to in excess of £17,000 pa. The option of joining the Council's Index Linked Pension Scheme is also available.

Further details and an application form are available by telephoning Sharon Povey on 0734 399091. Alternatively write to Reading Borough Council, Contract Services, 6 Darwin Close, off Commercial Road, Reading RG2 0SG. Please do not send CV's, only Reading Borough Council application forms will be accepted.

Closing Date : 25th April, 1994

Applications from people with disabilities

are welcomed over and above our commitment to equal opportunities for all. Child care facilities subject to availability. The Council operates a no-smoking policy.



Thornton Golf Club

require a

HEAD GREENKEEPER

for this pleasant parkland course.

Applicants should be fully qualified and conversant with modern techniques and machinery maintenance.

Accommodation is not available.

Apply in first instance with full particulars to:

**The Secretary, Thornton Golf Club, Station Road,
Thornton, Fife KY1 4DW. Tel: 0592 771111.**



Ealing Golf Club

Applications are invited from qualified Greenkeepers for the position of

COURSE MANAGER

at this well known West London Golf Club.

Salary negotiable within BIGGA recommendations.

Accommodation may be available.

**Please reply with CV to the Secretary/General Manager,
Ealing Golf Club, Perivale Lane, Greenford,
Middlesex UB6 8SS**



Due to the recent appointment of RPK Turf Care Supplies as main service agents for Jacobsens in the Home Counties, we require a highly motivated, professional

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Please apply in writing with CV to:

**RPK Turf Care Supplies, 25 The Junipers,
Elizabeth Park, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 4UX**



High Elms Golf Course, Bromley

GREENKEEPER

This busy parkland course requires applicants who are suitably qualified and experienced in all aspects of course management. The ability to motivate and lead an established team and organise work programmes, commitment to first class horticultural maintenance and customer care is regarded as essential.

A practical knowledge of modern greenkeeping machinery and current Health & Safety regulations is also required.

Salary is negotiable.

Apply in writing with full CV to:

**Personnel Department, S.I.T.A. (GB) Ltd, Central Depot,
The Avenue, Bromley, Kent, BR1 2BS**

Closing date: 18 April 1994

Ingol Golf Club (Preston)

Require a

HEAD GREENKEEPER

Applicants must be experienced in all aspects of greenkeeping with appropriate qualifications and have a practical knowledge of modern machinery and irrigation systems with good organisational and management skills.

A member of BIGGA would be an advantage.

Accommodation is not available. Salary negotiable according to experience.

Please apply in writing with a full CV to:

Mr J Russell, Lingfield Park 1991 Ltd, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6PQ

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**Write: The Sales Director, Thameside Fine Turf Ltd.,
Thameside House, Schoolfield Road, West Thurrock,
Essex RM16 1HR**



spewed forth to hide embarrassment and frustration if it were not a sentiment that has been echoed time and again right up to the present day. If those having some mastery of the game express such opinion what chance the Rabbit accepting a need to change his game to suit conditions favouring pitch and run rather than the American influenced target golf?

Darwin comments that the greens in the 1880s "were nothing like so smooth and trim" as they had become by the 1930s. However, the turf was a cause for concern, true fine seaside turf, sometimes bare and sandy, wiped off the face of the links by feeding and treatment. Sound familiar? Up until the 1920s nutrition of sports turf was largely based on agricultural practices, using generous amounts of organic manures, mixed fertilisers and lime, although there was some awareness of the difference between agricultural and golfing needs.

Hall (1912) suggested that the use of potash manures be avoided on golf links and that lime or fertilisers containing lime, such as basic slag, be used with discretion. He then went on to recommend basic slag at 753 kg/ha with guano and superphosphate! The Rhode Island Experiment Station after 20 years research work that began in 1905 concluded for turf of bents and fescues that:

- nitrogen is the most important nutrient and should be applied as an acid-reacting fertiliser such as ammonium sulphate;
- acid soil conditions so produced are harmful to weed species but tolerated by fescues and bents;
- as a consequence of this "acid theory", the use of lime should be avoided;
- where there is sufficient potassium and phosphorus none should be applied, except in composts.

There have been notable cycles of greenkeeping since then when these basic principles have been followed or ignored, in the latter case universally to the detriment of turf quality.

Let us return to the writings of Darwin and his much belated report (by some 80 years) on a match at St Andrews in 1849 when Allan Robertson and Tom Morris met the two Dunns. Remarking on the high scores from what were great players of their day, Darwin highlights changes in the development of the course with the fourball of 1849 facing infinitely narrower fairways with gorse encroaching, all manner of indifferent lies and greens which were known for their different poor qualities; "one for its roughness, the next for its sandiness, the one often for its heather roots all over it."

The holes, unless freshly cut that day, were probably enlarged through the influence of foot traffic with uneven edges as there were no supporting cups in those days. It would be very interesting to have Darwin's comments on the quality of finish to greens, never mind the rest of the golf course, today in comparison to that of the 1930s. When one reads what golfers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries had to contend with then today's player must be considered a most cosseted animal.

The principles of good design have changed little with time though around the turn of the 19th century there were still many sites onto which the architect could re-

TALKING HEADS

Heard it before?

Blaming greenkeepers and the state of the course for a bad round is one of the oldest excuses in the book, says Steve Isaac, the STRI's Scottish regional agronomist

ate a course without major upheaval. Whilst staying with his cousin in North Devon, General Moncrieffe from St Andrews was taken for a stroll on Northam Burrows, where he remarked "Providence evidently designed this for a golf links." The site moulded the shape of the golf course and a year later the Westward Ho! links existed. This event took place in 1863 yet how often do we hear a similar tale being told by the golf course architects of today when they pronounce the opening of their latest masterpiece, many of whom have moved vast amounts of earth to produce their providential links?

Increasing popularity for golf necessitated a move inland, away from its true links origin to capitalise on the suburban masses. The vast majority of inland courses in the late 1800s were made on clay, "hard as a rock in summer and unspeakably squeulchy in winter", according to Darwin. I am sure this rings a bell with course managers and golfers alike, even on some courses built within the last 20 years. Sad to say, the quality of construction, in some instances, hasn't significantly improved.

How often do we hear of ludicrous sums of money being talked when discussing the cost of building and maintaining the modern golf course? Compare these multi-million budgets with advice given by B Radford in 1910 to a meeting of golfers planning to build their own course when entering into negotiations with the farmer for the land. Radford was concerned that the group were being unrealistic in their estimates for the cost of building the course and fee structure proposed to fund future maintenance. He suggested that a 9-hole course could not be developed from farmland and brought into play under an expenditure of £250! For a club with a membership of 200, possessing 18 holes, the subscription should be at least three guineas! It is perhaps indicative of the strange world in which we currently live that the cost of golf course construction and maintenance has risen beyond compare since then, yet green fees have remained in line with inflation!

Radford thought it curious that the largest and most exclusive clubs of the day, siting Hoylake, Westward Ho! and St Andrews, did not spend as much per year on the upkeep of the course as did some of the small Metropolitan clubs with 90 acres, referred to as a "worm's paradise". This is a truism today when we

appreciate the benefits of natural drainage and infertility in sustaining quality turf and cutting costs. Unfortunately, Radford saw this in a different light and suggested that the custodian of the seaside course required little skill but that on the heavier inland course the art of greenkeeping came to the fore. Managing any golf course requires skill if good playing conditions are to be presented, the necessary skills between the two sites may well differ, on the "worms paradise" the greatest artistry may be that shown with a sprayer or a course closed sign!

Club golf has become extremely, some may say excessively, competitive with many clubhouses losing atmosphere and clubs the camaraderie that used to bring people into the game. This is nothing new. As early as 1931, Darwin was lamenting that golf in the early 1880s was a much "cosier" game. With far fewer playing the game there was a fraternal sentiment to others walking the hallowed turf. Neither are golf booms anything novel to the latter half of this century.

The 1880s saw the first real boom in golfing numbers with social groups other than the "gentleman" taking up the sport. Originally few young people in England played the game but by the 1930s there were "boy golfers by the thousand." In the 80s Darwin recalls ladies having tea in the clubhouse and perhaps walking around the course but he had no recollection of ever seeing one play, yet by the 1930s even ladies were a not uncommon sight on the links. Lord Wellwood, posing as an enlightened man, welcomed ladies' links as "a kind of Jew's quarter". A comment to that effect these days would bring down the full wrath of the anti-racist and sexist lobbies, though an inference that may still echo around many a gents locker room!

Over the last 15 years, developments in golf equipment have added yards to the average golfers game. Yet not all have been seen as a benefit to the game nor looked upon kindly by those that govern the game either side of the Atlantic, remember the contention over "square grooves"? Such incidents are nothing new and in 1902 the introduction of the Haskell ball from the USA caused a furore amongst the British golfing traditionalists. Stalwarts of the gutty foresaw that the game of golf would be robbed of some of its finer points as the Haskell provided extra distance, likely to ruin the playing of the links of the day, but they were shouted down by the majority who had never hit a ball so far in all their lives. Do you sense a touch of *deja vu* when hearing commentators of our day bemoaning the length obtainable with graphite shafts, metal woods and two piece balls?

To allay the belief that the litany of excuses for poor play including everything other than a lack of skill of the golfer himself is not a modern-day phenomenon, a final reference from the archives of golf. However, though the golfer playing in the days of the Charleston and The Great Depression had more than just his handicap to contend with when out on the course, he had the grace to vent his frustration on disruptive influences other than the quality of greenkeeping. A 1924 publication states that the main excuse of the time for poor play was indigestion!


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